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AUSTRALIA.

*Plague in Sydney.*SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, *March 15, 1900.*

SIR: I would respectfully inform you that the universally dreaded disease, the bubonic plague, has appeared in the city of Sydney, New South Wales.

While I have concluded that the certainty that the news regarding so important a matter would reach the Department and our whole country by ordinary cable, would excuse me from going to the expense of following out instructions as per paragraph 379, yet I assume that some more detailed knowledge may be appreciated by your Department, so I forward this for your information.

I am informed that there never was before a case of bubonic plague in New South Wales, in Australia, or in Australasia, though in 1894, during its visitation at Hongkong, there was some uneasiness here, and considerable inquiry as to methods of its treatment. On December 23 last a press message was received notifying the public of the presence of the plague in Noumea, the capital of the French colony on the island of New Caledonia, situated in latitude 20° south and longitude 165° east, and 1,050 miles from Sydney. As Noumea is in the tropics, a convict settlement, with mixed population, and very defective sanitation, there was little surprise at the outbreak, but its nearness to and frequent communication with this city—a regular line of steamers making semimonthly trips—the news created considerable alarm among the people within the metropolitan area. At once, though quietly, measures were inaugurated for the prevention of the invasion of the disease. I know of no finer quarantine station anywhere than Sydney has, and her quarantine regulations are very good, with competent officials in charge, so there seemed little danger of the introduction of the disease from Noumea.

The progress of the epidemic in New Caledonia was not rapid. During the week ended December 31 there were 12 cases and 7 deaths. The next week there were 9 cases and 5 deaths; the next 7 cases and 6 deaths, and the next 6 cases with 3 deaths.

On January 15 it was reported that 2 cases of plague had occurred at Adelaide, South Australia. This caused some uneasiness in Sydney, for Adelaide is a clean, healthful city, situated nearly 4,000 miles from the nearest plague-infected port with which it has direct communication. But these cases of supposed plague seemed to be of so uncertain a character and the evidence so broken and unreliable that I think even now there are many doubts about the cases being true plague.

On January 20 Dr. Gillies, in the course of his regular practice, found a case in this city which excited his suspicion, but, having had no clinical experience with plague, he was uncertain as to its true nature. A special physician from the health department visited the patient and almost at once pronounced it a case of true bubonic plague. A careful bacteriological examination was begun and a series of experiments carefully made. By a process familiar to the physician only, the plague bacilli became very apparent. Experiments were made by injecting some of the prepared serum into a mouse, and from this the inoculation of another mouse, until the results showed positively the bubonic plague bacillus. The local conditions of the first case in Sydney were not of the nature that can so often be truly said, "the conditions invited the

disease," though an investigation showed the sewerage to be seriously defective.

While Sydney has a population of about 425,000, with over 100 miles of water front within the metropolitan area, with miles of wharves and over 6,000 entries and departures of vessels annually, there are no slums, as we understand the word, in the city. As compared with most of American or European cities, there are no dark, damp, or dirty quarters. The population is so purely British that there are no foreign quarters, no Asiatic quarters, and no pest-breeding quarters in the city. With no particular point inviting to a fell disease, the attacks have been not in any suspicious quarters, but very erratic in their visitations. However, Sydney has one scar on her reputation for cleanliness, and that is a garbage dump, in a rather out-of-the-way place, called Moore Park. This garbage dump pollutes the air for a long distance, while it is a paradise for rats, and a tempting rendezvous for the rag-picker. It is believed that at least 2 persons may have become infected from contact with this foul spot.

The first person contracting the plague recovered, and before February 21, last, the port was declared clean. On February 22, Captain Dudley, a sailmaker, was stricken with the plague. About this time it was discovered that the rats were dying in unusual numbers, and it was found that the patient had been handling, with a view of disposing of, these rats. Since the case of Captain Dudley, there has been considerable anxiety, and every precaution has been taken to prevent the spread of the epidemic. As the press in Australia is rather conservative, as the authorities have been rather quiet in their work, and as there is little of the sensational in the nature of the people, there has been really no alarm in the city, and there probably will not be. There have passed fifty-two days since the first case occurred in Sydney, during which time there has been a total of 13 cases of plague, 6 of whom have died, 1 of whom has fully recovered, and the others are in various degrees of doubtful conditions.

The latest weekly bulletin, issued to the foreign representatives, is as follows:

Bubonic plague in Sydney.—Weekly bulletin.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH,
New South Wales, Sydney, March 10, 1900.

Week ended March 10, 1900, at noon: Patients in isolation remaining from week ended March 3, 2; admitted during week, 4; died during week (1 at Sydney Hospital), 3; remaining at quarantine March 10, 4.

C. A. SIMMS, *Secretary.*

Every precaution is now being taken to stamp out the disease in the city and to prevent its spread. There has been a house-to-house inspection throughout the metropolitan area ordered, the houses, wharves, and sewers are being examined and cleaned, and a rigid quarantine is being enforced, while a bounty is being paid on rats' scalps. While the Venice Convention prescribed a ten days' quarantine, owing to the practice of France with some of her colonies, twelve days have been adopted in Australasia as the proper period for this peculiar disease.

There is likely to be some inconvenience to travelers and shippers between the Australian ports, but beyond this there are reasons to hope little damage will result from this unfortunate invasion. As an illustration of this, the steamer by which this comes, the *Moana*, sailing to-morrow to San Francisco, will not be permitted to enter Auckland,

New Zealand, as the run between this and that port is but four days. I am informed that New Zealand will demand fourteen days' quarantine, and if she insists upon this and the other colonies follow the rather extraordinary example, trade and travel between the colonial ports will likely be paralyzed until the plague is utterly stamped out.

The records of the bill of health for the *Moana*, bringing this, after marking every other feature of the required conditions as good, the following is recorded :

Memorandum board of health, week ended March 10, 1900—Bubonic plague in Sydney.—Isolation from previous week, 2; admitted during week, 4; deaths, 3; remaining in quarantine March 10, 1900, 4. The cases of plague have appeared in different quarters of the city, but the city as a whole is clean, the locality is naturally very healthful and every precaution is being taken to prevent the spread of the disease. There now seems to be very little danger of an epidemic.

Respectfully,

GEORGE W. BELL,
United States Consul.

HON. SECRETARY OF STATE.

BRAZIL.

Births and deaths at Bahia during November, 1899.

BAHIA, BRAZIL, March 24, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a statement showing the vital statistics of Bahia for the month of November, 1899.

This statement is compiled in this office from the monthly report of the bureau of hygiene as published in to day's issue of the official paper.

Respectfully,

H. W. FURNISS,
United States Consul.

HON. SECRETARY OF TREASURY.

[Inclosure.]

Vital statistics of Bahia for month of November, 1899.

Maximum temperature.....	31° C.
Minimum temperature.....	23° C.
Average temperature.....	27.58° C.
Average relative humidity.....	87.31° C.
Rainfall.....	38 mm.
Rainy days.....	4
Prevailing winds.....	N., NE., NW.
Cases of infectious diseases—	
Yellow fever: (a)	
Male.....	1
Female.....	1
Treated in residence.....	2
Died.....	0
Smallpox:	
Male.....	0
Female.....	1
Nationality, Brazilian.....	1
Race, white.....	1
Had never been vaccinated.....	1
Treated in hospital.....	1
Died.....	1
Lepers in hospital close of last month.....	17
Male.....	13
Female.....	4
Entered during month.....	0
Left during month.....	0
Died during month.....	0

a Period of acclimatization, 1 of three years, other unknown. Nationality, both Brazilians; race, 1 white, other mixed.